



Good Little French Children Have a Dance and Give an Example for Young America to Follow

There is a near approach to the sentimental Sunday night in the heart of New York that is when the French colony across its children's ball. While it is not intended to exclude American children and those of other nationalities as far as the ball has been kept almost exclusively French in attendance.

The ball for many years has been given soon after Easter, the first Sunday following Easter, and it takes place in the Fanny Hall. It is the ghosts of dead and gone politicians have the power of revisiting their old time haunts they must be amused at the crowd of innocents invading their one-time resort.

For days preceding the event, young France wakes up early every morning and whispers, "Is it today?" and sleeps with a sigh of regret. According to statistics there were no children this year who slept the night before the usual question was asked and in its place, when the day broke bright and warm, young France

pridefully forth in all lace and epaulettes or wear their tiny knickerbockers and spotted linen with a Beau Brummel air.

On a chair in the center of the room a masculine ghost about the size of a man's arm, if measured lengthwise, is in inspection. He is standing there to give his sister an opportunity to reach him from all sides. He is a sturdy little chap, and in his lion garment perches his head on one side and winks at the intruder who is admiring his nonchalance under circumstances which may well be termed trying.

By some freak of the infantile mind, no sooner does he have his dark hair covered by a gorgeous blond wig, his flannels hidden beneath a satin suit fastened by ribbons and roses, which demonstrates him a Prince Charming, than he turns his face to the wall and cries miserably. Later he is the center of an admiring throng of the other sex.

In the hall the French and American

stylized and parents keep watchful ears for lapses.

Masquerade costumes are not required, but some parents rather incline to them, and one sees queens, pages, fairies, Highland lads and lassies, Columbianes and Pierrots. The majority of the little ones appear, however, in their new summer dresses, spick and span, with plentiful adornments of ribbons, and the big bows on their heads bobbing up and down and their sashes and shoulder

are many others and many who have become thoroughly Americanized in habit, food and tastes.

The floor is very slippery and every minute or two a bundle of arms, legs and white muslin is seen disintegrating itself and scattering. A small boy in a dark blue suit and who looks as if he might be put away in a good stout pocket actually falls off the edge of the platform to the floor below when the orchestra strikes up a sudden staccato movement, and is picked up by a small girl, who brushes him off matter-of-factly and then dances a two-step with him, holding him as high that it is only occasionally that they feet touch the floor.

In a corner a young man and a maiden of sweet and sturdy stature are exchanging low voiced comments of the bluish color variety, judging from the maiden's cheeks, and on the floor not far away a miniature edition of both sit holding hands and occasionally leaning over and imprinting unpolished kisses wherever they happen to light.

In another corner a woman on the sunny side of middle age is holding a two-month-old baby high in her arm, while she dances up and down in perfect time, as the baby gurgles its approval.

Tragical of the childhood variety are not absent from the ball.

The door of one of the boxes is opened once to admit two tearful figures. They are twinkle in proportions as in grief, and have only one word to utter.

"Maman!"

"Why, the poor dears," exclaims a matronly Frenchwoman, "they have lost their mother."

She casts a black, piercing look about the hall filled with its cowering couples.



LOST, A MAMMA.

with a single glad gasp of joy said instead "It is the day!" There were those who had attended the balls before and their delight was that of the known, and there were those who had not been to one of these dances or had forgotten about it, and for them was the greater joy of the unknown.

The debut of the French child was made early, if this ball may be taken as a criterion. Beginning with the dressing room and continuing the search through galleries, boxes and on the floor no fewer than a score of babies less than a month old were unearthed and from that period to the more advanced age of 80 years there were representatives of every year and month.

The children's ball, one of the most charming spectacles that can be seen, is

flags are used together for decorations and Contorno's orchestra plays the "Marsellaise" and other national songs. At 2 o'clock the children form in a line for the grand march, led by the little pupils of the Ecole Maternelle, with broad bands of the tricolor across their breasts. Following them come the children of the French colony, without respect to social and financial barriers.

While the procession consists of four or five hundred children is slowly making its way about the big hall, through the admiring throng of mothers, fathers and other relatives, the vice-president, M. Polifeme, explains to THE SUN reporter how this is the event of the year for Frenchmen and French women.

"French people who have been here



THE INEVITABLE FASCINATION OF THE BALLET GIRL.

"There she is. She is dancing, and, of course, has forgotten that the children will miss her."

It is explained to the twins that "Maman" will soon return. As well try to stem the floods of Niagara with argument on the waste of water. They weep more copiously and cry more vehemently, "Maman!"

Finally, they are lifted over the edge of the box to the floor below, and a masculine arm receives them and takes them to the very center of the dancing space, where they fall in an ecstasy of triumphant welcome into the arms of a gray clothed person who returns their damp embraces with motherly fervor.

Then one notices a small boy who is masquerading as a ballerina. He is grasping his doublet in the middle of the back with one hand and with the other is beckoning across the hall for a small girl to come to him. It is surmised that his acceptance of this invitation will mean that she has a partner for the next dance. It does, and she casts a triumphant glance at her less favored sisters.

Suddenly the dancing on the floor ceases and the crowd forms in a compact mass fronting the platform, which the orchestra has cleared. It is the moment for the

knots swaying in the breezes formed by their dancing.

But the children do not monopolize the interest. You hear your neighbor say:

"Do you see her—that one with the baby in her arms? She has four and they are always just like that—always in white and always so fresh and dainty, and she works hard all day." She must sit up all night to wash and iron. Isn't that French?"

And to a question put by THE SUN's reporter to one of the French ladies in a neighboring box as to the essential differences between the French woman of the

middle class and the American comes the response:

"I think it is this: The French woman thinks more of her home. She will take what money she has and have everything charming there and will economize if necessary in the matter of her own clothing, although her children will always look pretty and sweet, while the American women think more of their own gowns."

"No, it is not true that the French people live out, eating in restaurants and being rarely at home. My own experience among my compatriots here is that the French people rarely go to public dining places."

"There is not the same incentive here, for our people do not care for American cooking, and even the French cooking, advertised at some of the well known hotels and restaurants, is not the same as that you get in France. So they have their home table, and even after the theatre for supper to some private house."

"Of course I speak now of the French people who are essentially domestic. There

are many others and many who have become thoroughly Americanized in habit, food and tastes."

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a bag of blocks. Hope, anxiety and prayer are all impressed on the childish faces.

After the prizes are awarded the remainder of the afternoon is given up to French games and visits among the parents until the twilight is over and the children go home tired and happy.

One cannot help forming comparisons between such a festival as this participated in by the children of a large slice of the population of New York, a population which numbers all told about 35,000, and a similar festival where American children gathered without regard to visiting lands and where the prize of the contest would be a small gold medal or a silver pin. The thing you notice at the French ball is that of an unalloyed human joy too often indulged in by the young American to the distress of the looker on.

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NO, FOR THE COUNTRY!

Mr. MacIntosh Yearns to Get Out and Commune With Nature.

"I have a yearning now," said Mr. MacIntosh, "for nature. I want to get out into the soothing woods and by the babbling brooks and see the cows swish their tails in the meadows."

"I want to wander afield and pick buttercups and daisies and then ramble back to the cozy farmhouse and eat corned beef and turnips and pork and cabbage, and then sit out in the sun and smoke my pipe and watch the fleecy clouds float by, if I don't go to sleep."

"I want to go fishing in those streams where everybody caught big fish last year but where the few fish caught this year run so surprisingly small. I want to go somewhere where the black flies and mosquitoes are so thick that you have to push 'em away to get into the house, and where it rains for a week on end, when all you can do is sit at the window and see the trees drip."

"I want to get out and climb mountains and wade through bogs one day and go next day on a buckboard ride with fourteen other boarders along a sandy road where the horses have to walk for miles in the scorching sun, to come back at night and eat canned vegetables, because all the fresh vegetables had to be sent to the city to solace the poor people who couldn't get any."

"I want to go cruising in a cabin cat that can make six miles an hour in a gale but that in actual experience doesn't make any miles at all but gets becalmed and drifts on a blue mud flat, there to be left when the tide goes down; a boat that, when she is not grounding in the mud, is always getting her centreboard jammed, and things like that. I want to go bathing on a fine sandy beach, which in some mysterious manner, since the beautiful little booklet of the house was written, broken clam and oyster shells have been scattered thickly, and where you can't go bathing at all except at certain times of the tide."

"I want to eat in place of the fine fish dinners for which this house is famous dinners of fried halibut, the finest fish common to the coast, the regularly recurring good dinners; away from all the endlessly reiterated routine of the multitudinous facilities and comforts of a great city and back to nature and the simple life. But I can't go."

"Back in the country again, in that fine old farmhouse, I want to sleep on a feather bed in the attic and be stung by wasps. I want to be driven out of a forty acre lot by an angry bull. I want to see the fireflies fit at night and hear the bullfrogs croak and smell once more the kerosene when we light the lamps within."

"I want to get away, away, from the teeming city and all its conventionalities, away from the tiled bathrooms and the electric lights, away from the appetizing breakfasts and the regularly recurring good dinners; away from all the endlessly reiterated routine of the multitudinous facilities and comforts of a great city and back to nature and the simple life. But I can't go."

"Every year I have this yearning, just the same, but every year I must stifle it in the bud. For while nature beckons and beckons me away, there are other and more insistent beckonings—clutch armed these, as we might say—that bid me stay; rent bills and grocery bills and all those sordid demands that bind us down as with chains of steel."

"I want to go out and roll down hill, but I must stay here and work."

NIGHT FLIGHT OF BIRDS.

Favorite Time for Migration up the Mississippi Valley.

From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. This is the time when the birds pass in the night. They are passing this year, it is said, in greater numbers than for years. Bound for the waters and woods and the green fields of the North, they are hurrying over St. Louis every night, myriad, many, wonderful in habit, unerring in instinct.

Northern Missouri and the States of the upper Mississippi valley have from 250 to 300 different birds, from 25 to 35 of which migrate north between the first of April and the middle of May. Just now this migration is at its height. The geese and ducks have gone on in advance and, after many rebuffs, have driven winter headlong over the Canadian border. The song birds and all the other little feathered creatures which troop along after these bolder and stronger migrants are bringing up the main bird body and the chirping warblers, the robins and bluebirds led this wonderful procession.

The night is the bird's favorite time for travelling. At night hawks and other birds of prey are asleep, and the songster may venture out of the sheltering cover and cruise the high seas of the sky without fear. If you will step outside to-night and listen you may hear them passing.

Their plaintive little cries are calls of encouragement to one another. If the winds are buffeting them about their shrill notes betray their distress, and you may be sure they will not long wear themselves out trying to oppose a contrary wind. Some place near they will drop into clump of trees or a thicket, there to lie until the conditions shall be more favorable.

Most of the birds go in flocks. The blackbirds are famous for the innumerable host which they assemble. It is not uncommon to see a flock of them which cannot number less than ten or even twenty thousand birds. Unlike most of the small birds, too, the blackbirds do a great deal of their flying at night.

Some of the night flyers are great travellers. Even blackbirds, which do too much dipping and talking to get anywhere much, can make 200 miles in a night. The swift winced and the swallow can reach when he is on a stiff south breeze at his back. The ducks can do such wonderful feats of flying in a night that ornithologists are timid about publishing the results of their observations. It is apparently true that some of these flyers make as much as 1,500 miles without stopping, and that ducks like the canvas-back and the pintail cover five, six or eight hundred miles between dusk and dawn. The larger and swifter birds usually fly higher than the little songsters. On foggy nights they are all pretty much at sea. Oftentimes a flock of birds, groping along, will get tangled in a tree top or clump of tall grass and do not know what to do with it. They will get set up on such occasions in the night with the clamor of confusion and terror.

MRS. HOPSON'S ADVENTURE.

She, Perkins' Neighbor, Stays at a French Villa No Stranger to St.

"Mrs. Hopson" has been telling me a most remarkable story," said Mrs. Perkins to her husband at dinner.

"If I'd seen it in a newspaper I'd never have believed it. Such a narrow escape! Dear me, the amys' burned to a cinder! I've warned Rety again and again. She's secretly got over the shock yet."

"Why, Rety? asked Mr. Perkins. "Rety? Not Mrs. Hopson. If she didn't make such good bread and cook vegetables I'd get rid of her."

"Why, Mrs. Hopson?" asked Mr. Perkins. "No, Rety. She's been away all the spring."

"Rety?" said Mr. Perkins. "No, Mrs. Hopson. Most of the time at Hovler's Inn. Let's go there next year. She says it's the nicest place for muffins she was ever at. She got back last Tuesday and she couldn't get her trunk. Next time, she says, she's going to send one of her maids to get it. I think she'll send her things at the hotel till the last minute, wouldn't you?"

"I need her things!" said Mr. Perkins. "I can't see it. But what was her narrow escape?"

"Oh, she'd just been reading about a burglar that had himself locked into a trunk and taken into a house and got out and robbed it the same night. She was three days getting only one of her trunks, and she thought to herself—what a lovely sunset tonight! did you notice?"

"What made her think of a lovely sunset?" asked Mr. Perkins.

"She didn't. I was thinking of it. When it came she was sure it was here."

"Her sunset?" asked Mr. Perkins.

"Her sunset! No, her trunk! There were the initials and the foreign labels. They say she pasted most of 'em on herself. But when she went to open it, the key wouldn't fit. I saw Mr. and Mrs. Hatterton on the avenue this afternoon. The last time we saw them they were having trouble about their trunk in Boston. But now they were walking along together, laughing and as happy as possible."

"Why not? Trouble over a trunk shouldn't last forever."

"Oh, dear, how stupid you are! I meant it didn't look like it there was anything to talk about their getting a divorce."

"Looks more like it they had got one already," said Mr. Perkins.

"Well, she tried it again and again."

"Tried getting a divorce?"

"Mrs. Hopson try getting a divorce! Why, how silly! They got along beautifully together. He always lets her talk without interrupting. And she just adores him. And they've been married five years!"

"Oh, you meant Mrs. Hatterton tried it again and again?"

"Mrs. Hatterton! No, Mrs. Hopson tried the key. I meant. You ought to've known. It wouldn't fit. She knew 'twas the key, 'cause she remembered taking it out of the lock and putting it into her bag. They're carrying 'em much bigger now. I saw one to-day as big as a sofa pillow."

"A key?" asked Mr. Perkins.

"No, no, a bag. At any rate, she couldn't get it open. She sent for a locksmith. He fussed and fussed, but couldn't open it, and he made her nervous by asking her over and over if she was sure 'twas her trunk. She was thinking all the time of the burglar. I've told her over and over again not to cook her beef so long. It's like chips. It doesn't seem to do the least good. He said he'd have to break it open. He never knew a trunk that he couldn't open before."

"I never did, either," said Mr. Perkins. "At least I never heard of one that opened behind."

"I don't know what you mean," said Mrs. Perkins. "My, what poor gas! We'll have to have candles. That frightened her. She was almost sure that the burglar was in there. She wanted to send for the police. But the locksmith kept at work. She couldn't bear to think what might be in it. She didn't want to stay and see it opened. She was bound to leave the room and was just going to ask the locksmith to come in. It's a going to freeze to-night! I've a dozen plants outside. But he told her he'd look in first. Finally, he managed to turn the lock. 'No, no, don't open it!' said she. 'Peek in first anyhow!' So he raised the lid just a little and said—'Mary, take Mr. Perkins' plate; don't you see he's done with it? And he said—How awkward you are! Didn't they teach you better at your last place? Well—Oh, where was I? Oh, yes, he lifted the lid, and what do you think he saw?"

"The burglar, of course," said Mr. Perkins.

"Oh, how can you speak out like that?" almost screamed Mrs. Perkins. "I'll have a nightmare all night now. But it was worse than a burglar."

"Worse'n a burglar!" exclaimed her husband, interested. "What then?"

"She was so frightened she was going to run out of the room. But the locksmith called her back and she peeked in. There was nothing but Mr. Hopson's clothes!"

"What was there so dreadful about that?"

"Why, there wasn't one of the things she wanted for the reception to the Prince that night, and she couldn't go. That's why the key wouldn't fit. But she's hardly had a decent night's rest since, thinking of what might have been in it, and the burglar's getting out and frightening her to death. She says she never had a narrower escape in her life, except when she missed the steamer by only five minutes."

"And what happened to that? Founder on an iceberg?" asked Mr. Perkins.

"Oh, no; how absurd! She'd got mixed on the date. It didn't sail till next day."

"Closest calls I ever heard of," remarked Mr. Perkins.

"When they?" said she. "I knew you'd be interested, but I wish you wouldn't interrupt; you mix me up so."

How Small Carving Is Done.

From the New Orleans Times-Democrat. Thackeray could write the Lord's Prayer on a sixpence, which is the size of a dime, but it is now possible to write the prayer on a surface so small that one grain of sand would hide it completely.

Microscopists sell copies of the Lord's Prayer written in a circle only the 500th part of an inch in diameter. To read the prayer it is necessary to use a lens magnifying 500 times.

Writing so incredibly small is accomplished by means of levers six feet long. These levers are so adjusted that the motion is gradually lessened as it travels along them, until when it reaches the delicate end, armed with a minute diamond pen that rests on a glass surface, it causes the pen to register on the glass writing so small as to be invisible.

Diver's Work in Deep Water.

From the Hawaiian Star. Thirty fathoms, or 180 feet, is the depth at which the Japanese diver, Doumea, testified that he could work for a couple of minutes. Thirty fathoms is a sufficiently remarkable depth for diving, and Doumea was questioned a good deal about the experience of attempting to work at that depth.

"I can only stay just a couple of minutes—long enough to hitch a rope," he said. "To stay longer would cause a complete collapse. I was almost dead when I came up. If all the limbs were dead. The parts of the body protected by bones, such as the chest and the head, do not feel the effect, but everywhere there is flesh at the surface it feels paralyzed. The limbs seem to be dead."

OUR GIRL STUDENTS IN PARIS

GOING STRIVING FOR THE S' CESS ONLY A FEW AFFAIRS.

The High Strung American Temperament suffers under the cinema and the strategy—teachers no better than at home—many advantages, however.

Paris, April 25.—The list of American pupils enrolled with the various singing masters in Paris is quite as large this season as it generally is. What is the cause of this small army of American women seeking an operatic career is a question not yet answered.

The young girl coming over for a year or so to become familiar with the language, to enjoy the advantage of travel in a foreign land and at the same time to cultivate her voice for career purposes is another matter. Providing a candidate has a fine voice and a robust constitution, combined with musical intelligence, dramatic ability, a certain amount of magnetism and is willing to go through with the drudgery, she may, after three or four years, be admitted to sing in one of the best European opera houses. If she be the possessor of an extraordinary voice that will make the path easier.

Here so many American girls get over here is a mystery until one accidentally hears of the means employed to give them a European training or finish. Very often it is at the expense of relatives, who consider that the investment, even though it causes the strictest economy and sacrifice at home, may well repay in after years when sister or daughter is high on the ladder of success. A few girls have gained scholarships in the colleges of their own city. Sometimes a small inheritance pays for the tuition. There are in Paris girls sent by business men through a spirit of philanthropy not unmixed with selfish pride, when it may eventually become known that Mr. X. has been the protector of the coming prima donna, Miss—

This year there are something like 600 girls in Paris studying for the opera. This is about the average number of American voice students who come year after year. Other large cities in Europe have their own per cent, the number in London running about a third less than that in Paris. Vienna, Dresden, Florence, Milan, Rome, Berlin, Munich, Leipzig and Brussels entertain many, in all bringing the total to perhaps 4,000.

If relatives and friends knew of half the hardships that await the enthusiastic young singers they would think twice before advising them to come such a distance from home, often alone and unprotected, to live in one of the most immoral cities in all the universe. They come to Paris with misinformation regarding the life and living expenses, for if one lives in a comfortable way the cost is bound to exceed expectations. They have little or no knowledge of the language, they enter high priced pensions, the associations of which convey neither the ease of home nor the independence of hotel life.

For six months out of the year life in Paris is a serious problem. The short, dark days, the rain, the too mild air have their own effect upon the highstrung American temperament, which is sooner or later depressed from want of oxygenic atmosphere and bright, warm sunshine. The majority of French houses are seemingly built without any aim to health and ventilation, and often a cold contracts from the damp walls in the beginning of the new season bears one company till spring. Maybe the climatic conditions are in a great measure responsible for the failure of girls who undertake operatic careers with natural gifts in their favor.

One has only to visit the opera houses and concert halls abroad to appreciate the qualities of the American voice, for the fact is now generally recognized throughout Europe that the American singing voice is the coming medium of song. However, in no department of life do we find the good things of this world equally divided, and the American vocal student has her limitations. Critics say that she is lacking in temperament—call it explosiveness, passion, emotion, if you will; that she is ambitious, but that ambition may reach such a pinnacle that it absolutely ceases to be a virtue. In other words, the American girl (speaking generally) seeks to do the drudgery work of the profession and would reach the top of the ladder in a single day.

When she enters a class it is rather as the pupil than the student. The third of the characteristics mentioned above may be cultivated and the others "treated," but it takes the giving up of self on one hand and humiliations on the other—either or both of which would be impossible feats with some natures.

There are many advantages for the singer who can spend some time in Europe. One reason is that the opera season lasts eleven months out of the year, and another that opera may be heard in the best houses at about half the price demanded in America. It does one good, too, to come in contact with the Latin races, for the friction has a tendency to thaw out the phlegmatic temperament of the Anglo-Saxon. There are good acting schools and a systematic—if mechanical—course in stage training.

There have been great old world masters, but they have passed away or else have outlived their utility. There are fully as many exponents of their methods across the Atlantic as there are in European capitals. Only a few teachers have anything of a reputation and these demand extravagant prices of Americans and in the end do not accomplish as much toward advancing a career as a progressive American teacher who has the interest of his pupil at heart.

A large majority of the most promising voices is sent over to Europe for instruction. In every case where a singer has "arrived" she has done so through her own efforts, altogether unaided by the influence of a teacher. Some of these instructors are indeed far better known in America than in the cities in which they give lessons. Certainly their names have no effect on a manager, for what the impresario seeks is the voice that will sing the lines and the actress who will interpret the role.

There are at present several American girls taking leading roles on the European operatic stage, but this is the fruit of many years of vintage of singers.

In the past fifteen months two American girls have made debuts at the Opera Comique. From an artistic standpoint their success was not enough to retain them, nor did they attempt to ingratiate themselves into the good graces of the powers that be. However, the debutantes were successful, and they remained on from month to month, never being called on to make a second appearance and the only thing left to do was to send in a resignation, which was graciously accepted. Had each singer made a "friend" of some one in power they would certainly have had an equal chance with the rest, but he it said to the credit of Uncle Sam's daughters that as a rule they do not step down from their pinnacle of dignity and virtue.

The American girl with courage and talent who is bent on following the opera, in the writer's opinion, had best lay its good foundation in her own country and the day is not far off when even a finishing touch in Europe will not be required of a singer.

At all events the percentage of those who have come abroad to study and have succeeded is so inordinately small and their success has been often so dearly bought, that it surely does not seem to offer many, if any inducements.



THEIR FIRST BALL.